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Inside Washington

By Robert S. Allen

Washington.

The U. S. is strengthening its combat forces in Germany. While the Western foreign ministers are in session here deliberating the Kremlin-precipitated Berlin crisis, U. S. ground and air units in Germany are being quietly expanded to 85 per cent of battle strength.

This is a 15-point increase, which President Eisenhower has approved on the strong recommendation of the Joint Chiefs.

For economy reasons, U. S. forces in West Germany had been pared to around 190,000—approximately 70 per cent of battle strength. Even at this level, they comprised the largest element in the Seventh Army, the

main combat-ready unit of NATO, whose 400,000-odd troops also include 130,000 West German, 55,000 British, 30,000 French, and 7,000 Canadian.

Red forces in East Germany total 600,000. This includes 150,000 East Germans.

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A key factor in the buildup of U. S. combat forces in Germany is a Central Intelligence Agency report on the chances of war over Berlin.

In substance it's this: All-out nuclear war? No; limited war, maybe.

As CIA authorities size up this situation, Premier Khrushchev is not ready for a nuclear conflict. The Kremlin rulers need

another three to five years to build up their full might. Meanwhile, Khrushchev is seeking to gain his ends by "diplomacy, bluff and threats of war." These tactics could "touch off local fighting."

Discussing this analysis, Deputy CIA Director Robert Amory Jr., told a group of Congressional leaders, "The Soviet hasn't got what it takes rationally to challenge us in Germany this spring. If the West is resolute and holds firm, we are convinced Russia will be the one to back down."

Amory conceded, however, that "circumstances might force Russia to go to war, even though it is not ready to do so."